General Assembly

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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.5)*]

58/215. Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[1] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[2]

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capacity to cope with disaster risks,

Noting that the global environment continues to suffer degradation, adding to economic and social vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries,

Taking into account the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable developing countries, are affected by severe natural hazards, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heatwaves, severe droughts, floods and storms, and El Niño/La Niña events, which have global reach,

Expressing its deep concern at the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters,

Expressing its deep concern also at the enormous negative impact of severe natural hazards, including extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, which continues to hinder social and economic progress, in particular in developing countries,

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are

[1] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[2] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

especially severe in developing countries and hamper their achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing that national authorities need to undertake disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters and reduce the risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Recalling that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction provides a framework for collaboration on the development of methodologies to systematically characterize, measure, assess and respond to natural disasters, including weather-related disasters, hazards and vulnerabilities,

Taking into account the fact that extreme weather events and associated natural disasters and their reduction must be dealt with in a coherent manner,

Noting the need for international cooperation to increase the capacity of countries to respond to the negative impacts of all natural hazards, including extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, particularly in developing countries,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Taking note of the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,[3] in particular the section on the negative impacts of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters on vulnerable countries, in particular developing countries, as requested by the Assembly in its decision 57/547;

2. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means, including through cooperation and technical assistance, to reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters, including those caused by extreme weather events, in particular in vulnerable developing countries, through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue its work in this regard;

3. *Encourages* Governments to establish effective national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction, and to strengthen them where they already exist;

4. *Also encourages* Governments, in cooperation with the United Nations system and other stakeholders, to strengthen capacity-building in the most vulnerable regions, to enable them to address the socio-economic factors that increase vulnerability, and encourages the international community to provide effective assistance to developing countries in this regard;

5. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to enhance the coordination on the promotion of disaster reduction as well as to make available to the relevant United Nations entities information on options for natural

[3] A/58/277.

disaster reduction, including severe natural hazards and extreme weather-related disasters and vulnerabilities;

6. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[4] and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[5] to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution in a separate section of his report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and decides to consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at that session, under the sub-item "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" of the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[5] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.